(b) if so, the reasons for increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in aviation sector when the "Vision 2020" document is already under the consideration of the Group of Ministers (GoM);

(c) whether it is a fact that after 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, bringing FDI in domestic carriers would be a security threat or risk;

(d) if so, whether Ministry of Home Affairs has cleared the proposal; and

(e) if not, the reasons for bringing such a proposal without having been considered by GoM and Home Affairs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is under examination.

Relaxation in FDI norms

727. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had relaxed the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms for civil aviation in the recent past;

(b) if so, the benefits accrued to Government as a result thereof;

(c) whether the private airlines have been benefited more than the national airlines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to ensure that national airlines are not at loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Rail and road connectivity to metro airports

728. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether hue and cry raised over the connectivity of new Bangalore and Hyderabad airports has set to have positive spin-offs for 10 major airports across the country including those of the two silicon cities;

(b) if so, whether the Centre has got into the act to ensure proper road and rail based connectivity to the new and existing airports at the four metros and also at Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Coimbatore and Pune;

(c) if so, what extent the project has been completed; and

(d) to what extent it has been helpful to these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Issue of city side connectivity of airport pertains to State Governments/ local authorities.

However, the Government is making all-out efforts to coordinate with these agencies for providing improved city connectivity to the airports. For this purpose, Government of India have constituted a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Member, Planning Commission to finalise a plan for improved city connectivity of selected airports in consultation with the respective State Governments. The respective State Governments, from time to time, undertake/plan various measures such as widening of Highways, construction of High Speed Express Rail link from City Centre to the airports, etc., as per requirement.

Assistance of foreign aviation authorities

729. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to take the assistance of foreign aviation authorities to ensure its airline and airports to meet all safety norms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the existing safety and security measures taken by Government at airports are neither sufficient nor as per international safety norms; and

(d) if so, how Government is going to implement international safety norms at airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has offered to run National Projects in the areas of flight safety, aerodromes and air navigation services in order to address the findings of the audit conducted by ICAO in October 2006 under their Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme. These National Projects will augment the existing strength of DGCA by hiring experts (international/national) to assist DGCA in discharging its regulatory and safety oversight functions, till regular technical staff are recruited and trained by the Government. A plan outlay of Rs. 2.00 crore has been estimated during the year 2009-10 for the National Projects of ICAO.

(c) and (d) The existing security measures at the airports are sufficient and are as per standards of Annex-17 of ICAO. However, ICAO has offered to run a National Project for enhancement of Aerodrome Safety Oversight Capability to assist in implementing remaining corrective actions based on ICAO Audit recommendations and strengthen the DGCA by providing experts to carry out aerodrome safety oversight functions.

Seat upgradation in domestic flights

†730.SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the procedure for class upgradation in domestic flights;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.